



Food Matters

Food Safety Newsletter



Moorabool Shire Council's Environmental Health Unit is committed to providing a high level of food safety educational service to the community and businesses in the interest of protecting and promoting public health and wellbeing.

WELCOME BACK

Thank you to those who attended the recent food information sessions for on 'the spot fines'. We found it to be successful and appreciated your thoughts on our intention. Again we wish to clarify that the intention of the 'on the spot fine' is not for revenue raising but a means to emphasize the importance of food safety and hygiene in your business. For anyone who missed out and would like some further clarification please contact Environmental Health.

As we are almost at the end of Winter it doesn't necessarily mean an end to our cold and flu season so we thought we would do a friendly reminder to all our Food handlers to take extra care if you are unwell to not handle food. Please refer to page 3 for further information on food handler responsibilities.

As always, if you have any questions regarding the inspection process or any environmental health matter, please contact us to discuss. We have a centralised email address for all correspondence, so feel free to send any questions or feedback to info@moorabool.vic.gov.au and we will endeavour to reply in a timely manner.

REMINDER CHECKLIST

As a reminder prior to opening your business everyday, do the following;

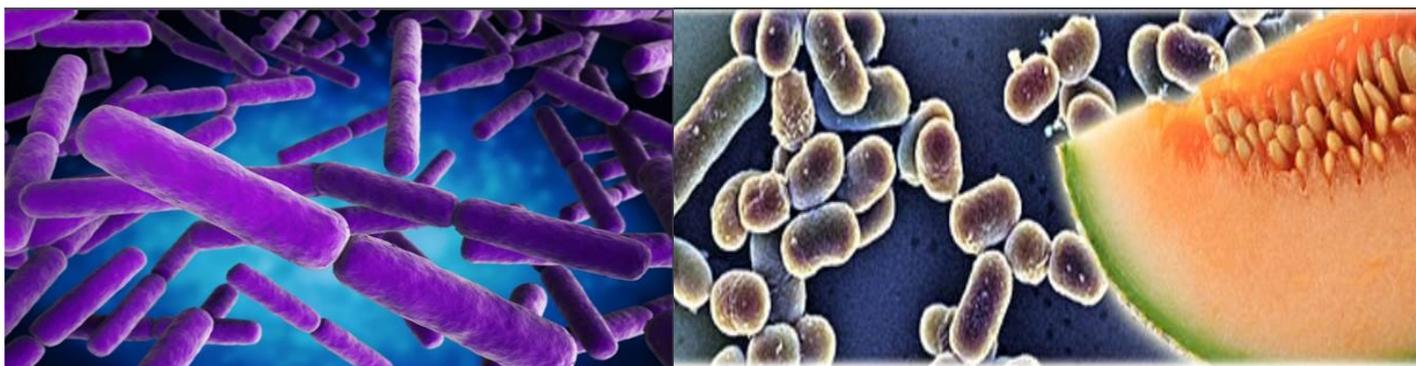
- Do you have a probe thermometer? Is it working?
- Have you checked that your temperatures are within range?
- Is your hand wash basin operational?
- Is your liquid soap and paper towel supplied to your hand wash basin?
- Is there a bin supplied to your hand wash basin?

Don't forget failure to check might result in an on the spot fine if they are not operating correctly.



©Tonis Pan * illustrationsOf.com/437161

KNOW YOUR BACTERIA: LISTERIA



What is Listeria?

Listeria are bacteria that can cause a serious illness called listeriosis in some people. While Listeria infection is uncommon and causes few or no symptoms in healthy people, it can be very dangerous for those people at risk.

Listeriosis is usually caused by eating food contaminated by certain types of Listeria bacteria. Listeria is found in soil, water, sewage and animals' guts and can survive in cold, moist locations (including food in the fridge). It can be carried into food premises through people's shoes, crates, machinery, etc.

Common foods that can be contaminated with Listeria include ready-to-eat foods (foods that won't be further cooked) such as pre-prepared salads and fruit, soft serve ice cream, soft cheese, deli meats and smoked seafood.

Who can get sick?

Listeriosis is rare, however people with weak immune systems, pregnant women and their babies and the elderly can get very sick or die. Two people have died from listeria between February and June this year.

The deaths were linked to smoked salmon and currently the Australian Government Department of Health are investigating three cases of Listeria infections occurring in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales. All cases were in people aged over 70 years and had significant underlying health conditions.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually start about three weeks after a person becomes infected (e.g. after eating contaminated food), but can start between three to 70 days from infection.

In healthy people listeria causes few or no symptoms and may include headache, fever or tiredness. In vulnerable people listeriosis can be serious and fatal. It can lead to sepsis and meningitis (infection and inflammation of membranes surrounding the brain). Symptoms in pregnant women may appear mild, but listeriosis can cause miscarriage, premature birth, or stillbirth. It is important that pregnant women who have symptoms of listeriosis seek medical attention immediately.

Important points to consider

- If your main customer base is for those that are vulnerable there are certain things you have to do to avoid listeria, such as wash and sanitise fruits and vegetables.
- Thoroughly cook raw meats and wash raw fruit and vegetables
- Avoid cross contamination – for example use separate cutting boards and knives for raw and ready-to eat food, and store cooked food separately from raw foods.
- Wash hands thoroughly before preparing or eating food.

Sourced from foodstandards.gov.au and Herald Sun.

HAND SANITISERS

Hand Sanitisers are a liquid generally used to decrease infectious agents on the hands. **Washing hands with soap and water is however the best way to reduce the number of microbes on them in most situations.** Alcohol-based versions typically contain a combination of isopropyl alcohol, ethanol or n-propanol brands that contain 60 to 95% alcohol. Those above 60% are most effective. Alcohol-based hand sanitisers work against a variety of microorganisms but not spores unless in conjunction with washing your hands. Bear in mind they are ineffective if hands are visibly soiled or dirty.

FOOD HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES

Food Safety may be at risk if staff are ill and/or do not use good personal hygiene practices. Illnesses that can be passed on through food include Hepatitis A and those caused by giardia, salmonella and campylobacter. Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities when handling food and do the following:



- report any illnesses and ensure they understand the risks of continuing to work when ill.
- take additional precautions not to contaminate food when they return to work after an illness
- Inform staff about the importance of hand washing in preventing food contamination.
- not return to work until they have been symptom free for **48 hours** if suffering from gastroenteritis symptoms.

Food handlers personal hygiene practices and cleanliness must minimise the risk of food contamination. The most important things food handlers need to know are:

- Do not sneeze, blow or cough over unprotected food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food.
- Do whatever is reasonable to prevent their body, anything from their body or anything they are wearing coming into contact with food or food contact surfaces
- Do whatever is reasonable to stop unnecessary contact with ready to eat food
- Wear clean outer clothing, depending on the type of work they are doing
- Make sure bandages or dressings or any exposed parts of the body are covered with waterproof covering
- Do not spit, smoke or use tobacco or similar preparations where food is handled

What can you do to minimise the risk?

- Thoroughly wash your hands



REMEMBER: Gloves and aprons are not to protect you from mess but rather to protect the food from you! It's important to ensure aprons are removed before breaks and gloves are changed regularly.

DON'T RUN OUT OF LIQUID SOAP AND PAPER TOWELS!



Ensure that you maintain a sufficient stock of hand soap and paper towels at your food premises. It is a requirement of the Food Safety Standards to ensure you maintain soap and paper towels at the designated hand wash basins. This includes toilet hand wash basins. Moorabool Shire Councils Environmental Health Officers



will enforce those basic food safety requirements and will issue Infringement notice if your business fails to comply with the requirements.

ALTERING YOUR FOOD PREMISES

Standard 3.2.3 *Food Premises and Equipment* sets out the requirements for food premises, fixtures, fittings, equipment and food transport vehicles. Food businesses that comply with these requirements will find it easier to meet the requirements of Standard 3.2.2 *Food Safety Practices and General Requirements*.

If you are thinking of altering your food premises any Council requirements for new work will apply to your alterations and the requirements in the standard must be taken into account.

In the early stages of planning your renovation, it is advised to talk to an Environmental Health Officer, this may involve getting them on site to discuss your ideas.

In addition, the Environmental Health Officer can provide you with a copy of the 'Guidelines design and Construction of premises'. If approval is not sought prior to the commencement of work and your alterations are not compliant with relevant legislation and standards, you will be required to rectify all non-compliances which could add further cost to your business.

FOOD ACT CONVICTIONS

In September 2014, 64 year old Ruth Hickey died when she ate a meal containing dairy. The incident occurred in Dromana at a business called 'Dee's Kitchen'. Ruth ordered the 'Shakshouka', a middle eastern dish that contains goats cheese (chevre). Ruth was well aware of her dairy allergy, so she ordered her meal without the cheese. As requested, the chef prepared her meal without cheese, however the tragedy occurred because the waitress gave her the wrong plate. According to Ruth's husband Barry, the chef said to the waitress "without dairy is on the right" and she took that as her right, he meant his right.

Ruth collapsed on the footpath in front of the business and died before receiving medical attention. In November 2015, Mornington Peninsula Shire took legal action against the proprietor of 'Dee's Kitchen'. At Frankston Magistrate Court, the proprietor was convicted and fined \$15,000 and ordered to pay costs of \$10,000. Under the Food Act 1984, the offence was against section 14(1) Supply food by way of sale for human consumption that was not of the nature or substance demanded by the purchaser.

The conviction was listed on the Department of Health and Human Services Food Act Conviction Register for 12 months. In February 2017, the Herald Sun wrote about this incident. In their article, they spoke of the anguish experienced by Ruth's husband following her death. Barry Hickey is now suing the restaurant for compensation.

Source: Department of Health and Human Services Food Act Conviction Register

FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Moorabool Shire Council undertakes inspections at least once a year to ensure the food you prepare and serve to customers is safe. While Council aims to protect consumers, we are also committed to providing local businesses with information and advice about safe preparation and handling of food.

The upcoming edition will be sent to you via email, so please make sure you let us know your current email address. The newsletter will also be available on the MSC homepage.

Mail PO Box 18 Ballan Vic 3342

Ballan 15 Stead St Ballan

Bacchus Marsh 215 Main St Bacchus Marsh

Darley 182 Halletts Way Darley

P (03) 5366 7100

E info@moorabool.vic.gov.au

W www.moorabool.vic.gov.au



facebook.com/mooraboolshirecouncil



twitter.com/mooraboolshire